

# Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program



*WHIP helps private landowners and operators improve fish and wildlife habitat and restore natural ecosystems with technical and financial assistance through one to ten-year contracts, or fifteen-year agreements.*

## Slide Brook Crossing (Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program – WHIP)

Over the past four years, NRCS, Trout Unlimited (TU), New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED), and the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game (NHDFG), partnered to restore native brook trout habitat in tributaries of Nash Stream in the Nash Stream State Forest. The Nash Stream State Forest, in Coos County, is the largest state forest in New Hampshire with over 40,000 acres. The Eastern Brook Trout is the only native trout that inhabits the streams of the eastern United States. It is the state fish in many eastern states, including New Hampshire, and is a prized sport fish. Today it is estimated that less than 9% of the areas that historically supported brook trout are intact. Most brook trout are relegated to headwater streams, where forest cover is still prevalent. Unable to thrive in poor quality water or degraded habitats, brook trout are excellent barometers of clean water and healthy aquatic systems. Their disappearance within a watershed indicates environmental decline.



The Nash Stream area, prior to becoming a state forest, was owned and managed by paper companies that did not focus on fish passage when engineering ways to move logs downstream. This WHIP project involved the removal of five undersized or perched culverts to allow for fish passage. Perched culverts outlet above the stream bed and can't be navigated by fish or other aquatic organisms. The Slide Brook Crossing was selected to demonstrate the effectiveness of a bridge construction technology not previously used by NRCS in the Northeast. The NRCS committed technical expertise and \$140,000 to the whole project with the remaining funds supplied by TU and the State of New Hampshire. The project also included other riparian work involving the restoration of vegetative stream bank growth (riparian buffer) and replanting of other areas devastated by the breaching of the dam in the late 1960s. The project is on-going.



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